

pleased to see that the bill affirms NASA's commitment to astronomy by ensuring that the Hubble will be serviced. It is my hope that Section 616 will also help NASA work with institutions, such as the Mauna Kea Astronomy Education Center, to make the work of world-class scientists accessible to their neighbors and children.

Finally, I would like to thank JEFF BINGHAM, Tom Cremins, Jean Toal Eisen and Chan Lieu of the Commerce Committee staff, and Mike Dodson, a fellow in Senator BILL NELSON's office, for their hard work on this important measure. I understand Mr. Dodson will be leaving at the end of the year. We will miss his counsel and expertise.

I urge the swift adoption of the conference report.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, my fellow Senators, I am pleased to join Senators HUTCHISON, STEVENS, INOUE, and LOTT today in presenting the 2005 NASA Authorization Act and managers' package that has been agreed to by conferees from the House and Senate.

I express my thanks for the work that my fellow conferees, the committees, subcommittees, and our staffs have done on this bill. I am confident that it will help Administrator Griffin to lead NASA to accomplish its many missions.

America is a nation of explorers. NASA explores the frontiers of aviation by atmospheric flight, the frontiers of space by going where others have never been; and the frontiers of science by conducting scientific endeavors that broaden our understanding of life, our home planet, and the heavens. NASA has not been authorized by Congress for some time. In fact, the last two times NASA was authorized was 1993 and 2000.

Congress needs to authorize NASA more often. When NASA is authorized infrequently, then oversight may become lax. The lack of an authorization bill leaves the authorizing function to the Appropriators—and they don't have time and it's not their job. In fact, the lack of oversight provided by authorizers over the last several years may have contributed to the loss of the Space Shuttle *Columbia*.

The NASA Authorization Act of 2005 will help the Congress to do a better job of performing oversight of NASA. The act is a 3-year bill, authorizing NASA from 2006 through 2008. It authorizes NASA appropriations for fiscal year 2007 and 2008.

Because appropriators have already funded NASA for fiscal year 2006 the authorizing conferees receded to the appropriations bill for that fiscal year. The bill authorizes \$17.932 billion for fiscal year 2007 and \$18.686 billion for fiscal year 2008, and provides more funding than the President's budget projections.

Like many of our colleagues, Senator HUTCHISON and I believe that recent NASA budget requests have been below the levels required for the agency to

perform its various missions effectively. That was made apparent recently when Administrator Griffin testified at a committee hearing before the House of Representatives, that the Space Shuttle program will have a \$3 billion plus shortfall over the next 5 years. Dr. Griffin's concerns have been echoed by a letter recently provided by several Members of the House to the White House calling for the space shuttle program to be fully funded.

This legislation authorizes NASA to return humans to the Moon, to explore it, and to maintain a human presence on the Moon. Consistent with the President's vision, it also requires using what we learn and develop on the Moon as a stepping-stone to future exploration of Mars.

To carry out these missions, this act requires NASA to develop an implementation plan for the transition from shuttle to crew exploration vehicle, CEV. The plan will help NASA to make a smooth transition from retirement of the space shuttle orbiters to the replacement spacecraft systems. The implementation plan will help make sure that we can keep the skills and the focus that are needed to assure that each Space Shuttle flight is safe through retirement of the orbiters, and to retain those personnel needed for the CEV and heavy lift cargo spacecraft.

The bill should be helpful for reducing if not eliminating a gap in America's ability to put humans in Earth orbit. The act also directs NASA to plan for and consider a Hubble servicing mission after the second space shuttle return to flight mission has been completed.

This NASA authorization bill calls for utilization of the international space station for basic science as well as exploration science. It is important that we reap the benefits of our multi-billion dollar investment in the space station. This act ensures that NASA will maintain a focus on the importance of basic science.

This legislation directs the Aerospace Safety Advisory Panel to monitor and measure NASA's improvements to their safety culture, including employees' fear of reprisals for voicing concerns about safety. The bill encourages NASA to more effectively utilize lessons learned and best practices, and to implement cost controls that are more effective for making better use of our taxpayers' money.

This authorization bill addresses NASA aeronautics and America's preeminence in aviation, calling for the President of the United States to pursue a national policy for aeronautics. The Europeans have stated their intent to dominate the airplane market by 2020. It is not in our national interest to let that occur.

The bill includes a limitation on reprogramming funds from space operations—(includes the space shuttle and international space station)—to exploration systems, and vice versa. This

limitation will ensure that no more than 10 percent of shuttle and station funds can be transferred into the exploration systems program to be used for a shortfall in an exploration-related development program. However, it will not limit the exploration systems and space shuttle programs from utilizing the same personnel, equipment, and contract vehicles to continue to safely fly the shuttle while developing the shuttle-derived crew exploration vehicle.

This act gives America the opportunity for implementing the Vision for Space Exploration; renewing our commitment to U.S. civil aviation and NASA aeronautics research; conducting important science activities at NASA; and assuring that America has continuous human access to space.

By passing this legislation, we will continue to strengthen our economy and inspire the next generation of scientists, engineers, and explorers.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the conference report be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The conference report was agreed to.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, this is the NASA authorization bill.

I congratulate Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON for this particular piece of legislation, because as we look to the future, science and the technology, and the importance and significance of this legislation stands out.

A few minutes ago, I was talking about SMART grants—these math, education, science, and engineering grants which are being given to juniors and seniors in college. This marries with that beautifully in terms of making sure that we have a strong technology base in terms of jobs and competitiveness.

I congratulate our distinguished colleague from Texas, Senator HUTCHISON, for her leadership on this bill.

TECHNICAL CORRECTION IN THE ENROLLMENT OF S. 1281

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to H. Con. Res. 324 which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (H. Con. Res. 324) directing the Secretary of the Senate to make a technical correction in the enrollment of S. 1281.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 324) was agreed to.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION PROTECTION OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent the Committee on Foreign Relations be discharged from further consideration of H. Con. Res. 230, and the resolution be referred to the Committee on Finance.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be discharged and the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H. Con. Res. 230.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 230) expressing the sense of the Congress that the Russian Federation must protect intellectual property rights.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 230) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

HONORING PILOTS OF THE FEDERAL FLIGHT DECK OFFICERS PROGRAM

RECOGNIZING AFRICAN-AMERICAN BASKETBALL TEAMS AND PLAYERS

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent that the Commerce Committee be discharged and the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H. Con. Res. 196 and H. Con. Res. 59, en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the resolutions by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 196) honoring the pilots of the United States commercial air carriers who volunteered to participate in the Federal flight deck officers program.

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 59) recognizing the contributions of the African-American basketball teams and players for their achievements, dedication, and contributions to the sport of basketball and to the Nation.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolutions, en bloc.

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The concurrent resolutions (H. Con. Res. 196 and H. Con. Res. 59) were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

UNACCOMPANIED ALIEN CHILD PROTECTION ACT OF 2005

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar 74, S. 119.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 119) to provide for the protection of unaccompanied alien children, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent the Feinstein substitute amendment which is at the desk be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read the third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements related to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 2692) was agreed to.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

The bill (S. 119), as amended, was read the third time and passed.

VOLUNTARY MORTGAGE PAYMENT FORBEARANCE PERIOD

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 347, submitted earlier today by Senator LANDRIEU.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 347) expressing the sense of the Senate that lenders holding mortgages on homes in communities of the Gulf Coast devastated by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita should extend current voluntary mortgage payment forbearance periods and not foreclose on properties in those communities.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements related to the resolution be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 347) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, is as follows:

S. RES. 347

Whereas the Gulf Coast of the United States has experienced 1 of the worst hurricane seasons on record;

Whereas Hurricane Katrina and multiple levee breaks destroyed an estimated 275,000 homes in the Gulf Coast;

Whereas 20,664 businesses in the Gulf Coast sustained catastrophic damage from Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita;

Whereas, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis at the Department of Commerce, personal income has fallen more than 25 percent in Louisiana in the third quarter of 2005;

Whereas, in the time since Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma, the Small Business Administration has only approved 20 percent of disaster loan applications for homeowners in the Gulf Coast and has a backlog of more than 176,000 applications for this assistance as of December 21, 2005;

Whereas, of the 20,741 homeowner disaster loan applications that have been approved in the Gulf Coast by the Small Business Administration, only 1,444 have been fully disbursed;

Whereas, in response to these circumstances, commercial banks, mortgage banks, credit unions, and other mortgage lenders voluntarily instituted 90-day loan forbearance periods after Hurricane Katrina and did not require home owners in the Gulf Coast to make mortgage payments until on or about December 1, 2005;

Whereas, after the termination of the 90-day forbearance period, many home and business owners have received notice from their lenders that they face foreclosure unless they make a lump sum balloon payment in the amount of the mortgage payments previously subject to forbearance; and

Whereas foreclosure on homes and businesses in the Gulf Coast will have a detrimental impact on the economy of the area, will deprive property owners of their equity at a time when they can least afford it, and will have a negative impact on lenders who will be holding properties that may not be readily marketable on the open market: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) Congress should act early in the second session of the 109th Congress to consider legislation to provide relief to homeowners in the Gulf Coast; and

(2) commercial banks, mortgage banks, credit unions, and other mortgage lenders should extend mortgage payment forbearance to March 31, 2006, in order to allow Congress the time to consider such legislation.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TO MEET THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS ACT OF 2005

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 281, S. 1315.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows: A bill (S. 1315) to require a report on progress toward the Millennium Development Goals, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with amendments.

[Strike the parts shown in black brackets and insert the parts shown in italic.]

S. 1315

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "International Cooperation to Meet the Millennium Development Goals Act of 2005".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings: